

FILEDUNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the
District of New Mexico

APR 19 2011

United States of America

v.

Dennis J. Lovato

Defendant

Case No.

MATTHEW J. DYKMAN
CLERK

11MJ1046

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

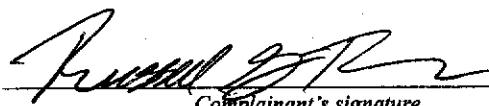
I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date of 04/15/2011 in the county of Sandoval in the _____ District of
New Mexico, the defendant violated 18 U. S. C. § 1111, 1153, an offense described as follows:

did murder Joseph Melvin Lucero, a Native American, on the Santo Domingo Pueblo. Lovato is also Native American.

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See attached affidavit.

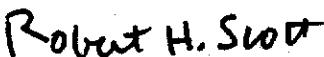
 Continued on the attached sheet.

Complainant's signature

Russell S. Romero, Special Agent, FBI

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 04/19/2011City and state: Albuquerque, New Mexico

Judge's signature

ROBERT H. SCOTT

U.S. magistrate judge

Printed name and title

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO

9 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
10)
11 VS.)
12)
13 Dennis J. Lovato)
14 Year of Birth: 1984)
15 SSAN: xxx-xx-1299)

AFFIDAVIT

19 I, the undersigned, being duly sworn, hereby depose
20 and state as follows:

21
22 I, Russell S. Romero, am a Special Agent of the
23 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and have been so employed
24 for over four years. I am currently assigned to the Santa Fe
25 Resident Agency of the Albuquerque Field Office, to investigate
26 violations of Federal Laws, including crimes committed in Indian
27 Country such as homicide, sexual assault, and assault. I was
28 previously assigned to the Honolulu and San Francisco divisions,
29 respectively, where I investigated gang and drug cases, as well
30 as special jurisdiction cases involving crimes aboard aircraft
31 to include sexual assault and assault. The information set
32 forth in this affidavit has been derived from my own
33 investigation or communicated to me by other sworn law
34 enforcement officers.

1 On Friday, April 15, 2011 at approximately 11:45 p.m.,
2 your affiant received a call from Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
3 Special Agent Jeff Sandoval reporting that a possible homicide
4 had occurred on Santo Domingo Pueblo, Santo Domingo, New Mexico.

5

6 Your affiant, as well as FBI Special Agent David A.
7 Kice, responded to the pueblo with BIA Special Agent Sandoval to
8 initiate an investigation. Interviews of first responders
9 revealed that on April 15, 2011, Santo Domingo Pueblo Tribal
10 Officials Samson Bailan and Nathaniel Pacheco were patrolling
11 Santo Domingo Pueblo, when they noticed a blue Dodge Durango,
12 New Mexico License 904PLC, driving on Cochiti Lane. The driver
13 appeared intoxicated and was advised to stop; however, the
14 driver of the vehicle did not comply and fled. BIA police were
15 called at approximately 9:45pm to stop the vehicle.

16

17 Soon after, BIA Police Officer Earl Chicharello caught
18 up to the vehicle at the Mateo Overpass in Santo Domingo Pueblo,
19 and arrested the driver, identified as Dennis J. Lovato, Year of
20 Birth (YOB) 1984, SSAN XXX-XX-1299, a Tribal Member of Santo
21 Domingo Pueblo, on suspicion of Driving Under the Influence
22 (DUI). Upon arrest, Lovato advised Officer Chicharello that he
23 had just been involved in a fight with "Youngblood," later
24 identified as Joseph Melvin Lucero, YOB 1949, SSAN XXX-XX-6845,
25 also a Tribal Member of Santo Domingo Pueblo. Lovato stated
26 that the fight occurred at Lucero's residence, located on Santo
27 Domingo Pueblo. The arresting officer noted that Lovato's shirt

1 and hands were covered in blood, and that Lovato had a cut on a
2 finger on his right hand. Lovato told Officer Chicharello that
3 he was, "fighting for his life."

4

5 There were two other occupants in the vehicle,
6 including the registered owner, Eddie N. Garcia (Eddie), YOB
7 1959 and Nelson Lee Garcia (Nelson), YOB 1963. Both Eddie and
8 Nelson were also arrested. All three occupants were intoxicated
9 and were transported to the Santo Domingo Pueblo Tribal Office.

10

11 Lovato was transported to Indian Health Services (IHS)
12 in Santa Fe, New Mexico to tend to his injured right hand.
13 Prior to being taken to IHS, Lovato was overheard making
14 physical threats to the BIA officers. He was also overheard
15 saying, "I was defending myself; I got in a knife fight with
16 'Youngblood,' and "I got scared; I got paranoid; I just left."
17 He was later booked at the Sandoval County Detention Center for
18 the DUI charges.

19

20 Also on Friday, April 15, 2011, at approximately
21 9:45pm, Lucero's neighbor's son, Ray Rosetta (Ray), noticed
22 someone lying outside of Lucero's residence, between the
23 residence and the road. Ray noted that Lucero was known to have
24 parties and he believed that whoever it was had just passed out.
25 Later, when Ray's father, Martin Rosetta, arrived home, he
26 notified Santo Domingo Pueblo Tribal Officials of the body
27 laying outside of Lucero's residence.

1
2 BIA police, along with Tribal Officials and Santo
3 Domingo Emergency Medical Services (EMS) arrived at Lucero's
4 residence and found Lucero deceased with his face swollen and
5 bloody.

6
7 On Saturday, April 16, 2011, your affiant, FBI Special
8 Agent Kice, and BIA Special Agent Sandoval interviewed Eddie N.
9 Garcia at the Santo Domingo Tribal Office. Prior to beginning
10 the interview, Eddie was advised of his Miranda rights and
11 acknowledged that he understood them. Eddie stated that he was
12 so intoxicated that he did not recall going to Lucero's
13 residence, nor did he recall a fight between Lovato and Lucero.

14
15 On Saturday, April 16, 2011, your affiant, FBI Special
16 Agent Kice, and BIA Special Agent Sandoval interviewed Nelson
17 Lee Garcia at the Santo Domingo Tribal Office. Prior to
18 beginning the interview, Nelson was advised of his Miranda
19 rights and acknowledged that he understood them. Nelson stated
20 that Lovato and Eddie picked him up at the New Mexico Rail
21 Runner that evening. When they returned to the pueblo, they
22 drove to Lucero's residence. Nelson stated that Lovato and
23 Lucero had been in an argument a long time ago. Nelson
24 overheard Lovato say that that he (Lovato) was "gonna get him
25 (Lucero)." Lovato then exited the vehicle and starting fighting
26 with Lucero. Nelson stated that he saw Lovato punching and
27 kicking Lucero and stated that neither party had any weapons, to

1 include a knife. During this time, Nelson told Eddie, "What's
2 he doing?" and "Come on, help me out, let's tell Dennis not to
3 fight 'Youngblood.'" Nelson and Eddie then stepped out of the
4 vehicle, and pulled Lovato back in while Nelson told him
5 (Lovato), "Don't do that to him," and "let's get out of here,
6 don't hit him no more." Lovato then exited the truck a second
7 time to continue beating Lucero. Lucero was already down on the
8 ground when Lovato was kicking him. When Lovato returned to the
9 vehicle, he stated, "I think I hit him hard; I think I killed
10 him." They then "took off real fast," and Nelson was scared
11 that they would flip the vehicle over.

12

13 On Saturday, April 16, 2011, your affiant and FBI SA
14 Kice interviewed Dennis J. Lovato at the Sandoval County
15 Detention Center. Prior to beginning the interview, Lovato was
16 advised of his Miranda rights and acknowledged that he
17 understood them. Lovato stated that he had stopped at Lucero's
18 residence because Nelson had wanted to stop there. Lovato and
19 Eddie stayed in the vehicle to wait for Nelson. Lovato exited
20 the vehicle when he saw Lucero shoving Nelson. Lovato stated
21 that he hit Lucero twice and knocked him down, where he then
22 kicked him. Lovato then got on top of Lucero and began punching
23 Lucero through Lucero's fists as he was trying to cover his
24 face. Lovato stated that he hit Lucero several times while he
25 was on the ground, and that he stood up and kicked Lucero in the
26 head twice more after he finished punching him. He then got
27 back into the vehicle and left the scene with Eddie and Nelson.

1
2 Lovato initially stated that Lucero had a knife when
3 Lucero was fighting with Nelson; however, he did not know what
4 happened to it when he and Lucero were fighting.
5

6 There was no knife found at the crime scene; however,
7 a folding knife was found upon search of the vehicle which was
8 conducted on April 18, 2011.

9
10 New Mexico Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) records
11 list Lovato's height and weight as 6'3", 265lb. New Mexico DMV
12 records list Lucero's height and weight as 5'6", 180lb.
13

14 On Saturday, April 16th, 2011, FBI Special Agent Mark
15 Buie attended an autopsy performed on Lucero's body at the
16 Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI) in Albuquerque, New
17 Mexico. Preliminary autopsy results indicate that the
18 cause/manner of Lucero's death was Multiple Blunt Force
19 Trauma/Homicide.

20
21 Based on the information set forth in this affidavit,
22 your affiant submits that there is probable cause to believe
23 that Dennis J. Lovato, an Indian, did unlawfully, maliciously,
24 and with malice aforethought, kill Joseph Melvin Lucero, also an
25 Indian, on April 15, 2011 on Santo Domingo Pueblo, Santo
26 Domingo, New Mexico.
27

1 Your affiant further submits that this murder was
2 committed in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections
3 1111 and 1153.

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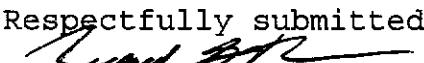
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10

11

12 I swear that this information is true and correct to the best of
13 my knowledge and belief.

14

15 Respectfully submitted,
16 
17 Russell S. Romero
18 Special Agent
19 Federal Bureau of Investigation

20

21

22 Subscribed and sworn to before me this 19th day of April, 2011.
23

24

25

26

27

28

29

Robert H. Scott

United States Magistrate Judge